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ABSTRACT

This guide for leaders of workshops on self-appraisal for university teachers presents a process that is being developed in Australia and the United Kingdom to help members of professional groups monitor their effectiveness in conjunction with their peers. The approach has been used in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Japan. The method allows individuals to define criteria of competence for their work, monitor their daily professional activities, review their individual performance with their peers in the group, and make plans for modifying their practice in the light of their appraisal. The role of facilitator or group leader is to guide participants through each stage, to help individuals and the group make decisions about which steps are most relevant for them, and encourage adequate time for the process to unfold. Eighteen steps of the approach are discussed, and a flow diagram summarizing the steps is presented. Possible variations of the approach are also identified. (SW)

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SELF-APPRAISAL FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: A GUIDE FOR WORKSHOP LEADERS

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Preface

This paper is a workshop guide aimed at those people who may wish to convene or lead a workshop on self-appraisal for university teachers. It describes a process which is being developed in Australia and the U.K. to help members of various professional groups monitor their own effectiveness in conjunction with their peers. It has been used by the authors with groups of university teachers and others in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and Japan. The present version of the workshop is described herein, but it is undergoing continuing development and the authors wish to invite feedback from others with an interest in this area. For this purpose a detachable feedback sheet has been included at the end for your use.

Abstract

A workshop method which has been used to enable university teachers to engage in a self-appraisal is described. The self-appraisal process is one way of initiating a programme of professional development which is defined by the participants. Individuals define criteria of competence for their work, monitor their daily professional activities, review their individual performance with their peers in the group and make plans for modifying their practice in the light of their appraisal. The paper is written from the point of view of someone who may act as a facilitator for a self-appraisal group. Stages of the process are detailed and guidelines are provided to assist the facilitator enhance the effectiveness of the approach.

Preamble

There are many ways to initiate staff development activities in institutions: through workshops or courses; through course development; through professional involvements or through administrative edict. We believe that approaches which are based upon individual academics identifying their own needs are usually the most productive and present the greatest chances for long-term development of staff.

The self-appraisal workshop or series of workshops is one way of systematically initiating a self-defined programme of professional development. Unlike most other workshops its content is not determined in advance: it is an approach which provides a forum for individuals, in consort with their peers, to identify and engage in activities which they perceive as necessary and important for their own development. A self-appraisal workshop may take any area of professional practice as its starting point. In connection with teaching it could focus on teaching skills, counselling, assessment, interpersonal relationships or any other area relevant to the participants. In the research area it could relate, for example, to research skills, funding, management of projects, relationships, or reporting. In administration, it could deal with organisational skills, committee work, chairmanship, planning, or working with people.

The procedure outlined below has been evolved over a number of years with a variety of professional groups and in a range of settings in order to meet the needs of experienced and relatively independent practitioners to appraise the quality of their practice. These have included doctors, dentists, managers, group facilitators, counsellors, teachers, trainers, clerics and students. It has more recently been used with teachers and staff developers in higher education in both extra and intra-mural settings in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Rationale

Freedom to practice as one judges proper is one of the traditional foundations upon which academic life is built. Such autonomous professional

practice brings with it the corresponding responsibility to monitor, and maintain and improve the many and varied aspects of that practice. Engaging in the appraisal of one's own practice is thus particularly compatible with the self-determining nature of an academic, and is a form of research enquiry which is fully in accord with the ethos of higher education institutions. We know that it is, however, a challenging activity. It therefore is usually carried out unsystematically or in a guarded way, especially when others are involved, and can be relatively superficial. Peer appraisal is rarely carried out face-to-face and, when done, is often in a situation of hostility when something has gone wrong. This workshop has therefore been developed to provide a systematic way of supporting participants in the process of self-appraisal; and its structure is designed to facilitate this, in order that colleagues adopt a collaborative rather than an adversary role in a context of mutual inquiry.

Overview of the workshop

The workshop is essentially an enabling structure, that is, it is a procedure designed to enable academics to examine their own practice in teaching, in research or in any other aspect of their professional activity. It is a way of working on any of a variety of topics concerned with the quality of everyday practice.

The content of the workshop is not predetermined, but chosen by participants in the light of their own needs and interests. The process is described in terms of 18 stages, the number and order of which may be varied with discretion. These are summarised in a flow diagram in Appendix 1.

The activity of the workshop engages participants in (a) defining criteria of competence and associated standards in any area of everyday practice; (b) monitoring their activities in daily professional life; (c) reviewing their individual performance with others who are also involved and (d) opening themselves to possible change arising from their own and others' independent assessments.

The role of facilitator or group leader is to (a) guide participants

through each stage, (b) to help individuals and the group make decisions about which steps are most relevant for them at the time and (c) encourage adequate time for the process to unfold.

General aims of the self-appraisal workshop

These are:

(i) to introduce a strategy for the appraisal of performance which can be engaged in by peers as an on-going practice within tertiary institutions;

(ii) to provide an opportunity to reflect upon and review any area of professional competence;

(iii) to encourage individuals through this self-appraisal to identify ways they might improve aspects of their own practice chosen by themselves;

(iv) to enhance the possibility of this improvement through the supportive scrutiny of peers;

(v) to foster and develop support systems for individuals interested in self-directed improvement by decreasing the loneliness of practice in isolation.

The specific intentions of the workshop are to enable participants to carry out a self appraisal in an area of their own choice, by means of:

(i) identifying criteria of excellence and standards of competent practice in this area;

(ii) developing practical methods for carrying out self-appraisal in everyday practice;

(iii) identifying specific areas of improvement and modifying practice accordingly.

Practicalities

The length of the workshop may be varied according to circumstances, three main variations being available:-

(i) a one session sampler (3-4h) in which a retrospective self-appraisal is carried out;

(ii) a two or three session (6-8h) introduction, allowing sufficient time between sessions to carry out self-monitoring activities and associated data gathering;

(iii) an on-going series of meetings using two or more cycles of the process in the same area of practice, or in new areas of practice.

These are described in more detail in Appendix 2, which outlines examples of particular variations.

Upper and lower limits to the number of participants depend on facilitator skill and the experience of participants, especially in interpersonal group work. A degree of heterogeneity in the experience and background of participants is desirable to enable a wide range of criteria and methods to be generated. When the people involved all come from the same institution, it is easiest to start with those who do not work closely together and whose work does not directly affect that of others present. In this case 8-10 members is a reasonable upper limit. When members are close colleagues, more than 5 is likely to require a lengthy closure time. When members are from different departments or institutions, the number will be limited only by the personal preference of the facilitator or the number of people available to facilitate sub-group working.

The main requirement in the setting is a neutral area with sufficient flexibility of seating to allow a whole group meeting (for which we recommend no desks or tables) and any work in small groups or pairs.

Materials required are normally limited to flip charts, broad felt pens, sticky tape or "blue tack" and walls to display the charts. Facilities for rapid duplication of record sheets composed in the first workshop are helpful to aid self-monitoring between sessions. Other resources will be defined and provided by group members.

PROCEDURE

In presenting a procedure for the conduct of a self-appraisal workshop we are aware of various audiences and their possibly conflicting needs. Those experienced in the facilitation of groups will probably find our remarks over-determined and perhaps rather mechanistic, whereas those who have relatively little background in this area may find the lack of detailed and specific tasks at some stages rather frustrating.

Where we have erred, it is on the side of being explicit: skilled group leaders will be able to identify variations of their own which will be just as effective as those we have suggested.

The procedure described below is summarised in Appendix I as a flow diagram.

1. Initiate Self-appraisal Group

There are many ways in which a self-appraisal group can be formed. In general it is preferable for a group to come together in response to a set of commonly felt needs rather than for it to be formed in isolation from specific concerns. The starting point may be a desire to engage in a self-appraisal exercise or an identifiable problem area which might be approached by a self-appraisal activity, or it may be initiated either as part of an ongoing professional development programme or as a conclusion to a workshop activity on another topic.*

Certain principles should be explicit from the start. Attendance should be entirely voluntary and participants should be invited to opt in to the activity once the rationale and approach have been clearly outlined. There should be a clear understanding or contract in which all participants agree to reflect on their own practices with the assistance of others and to engage in a self-appraisal of the agreed area of practice and to share as much or as little of that experience with other members as they person-

* The general issue of creating a context for professional development in higher education is a very substantial one which we do not have space to address in this publication.

ally feel appropriate. Each person should undertake a commitment to attend all the scheduled meetings. In some cases a detailed briefing circulated in advance may be appropriate but in many workshops a simple outline of the basic idea of self-appraisal may be quite sufficient. However plenty of time needs to be devoted at the start to an explanation and discussion of the principles, before launching into the stages which follow.

2. Select an area of practice to appraise

Areas or topics can be elicited from the group or can be either negotiated or suggested in advance as the focus of activity. The group as a whole might decide to agree on a common area on which to work or individuals may select different ones. It is simpler in the first instance if a common area is considered. It is also easier if a less challenging aspect of practice is chosen by those in their first acquaintance with the strategy - especially in a meeting of colleagues.

Examples of areas which have been selected are: lecturing, the management of time, consulting with students, and group leadership.

3. Agree on criteria of competent practice

The questions which must be addressed here are, How would one recognise competent practice in the area? What standards should apply? What would distinguish good from bad practice?

We have used three main ways to establish such criteria. One method for a common area of practice is brainstorming: each person contributes by free association to a central list which is not evaluated until all contributions have been made. There are then two ways of proceeding; the quickest is to suggest that participants each select no more than three of the criteria which attract their attention, or alternatively with respect to which they may say they perform either well, moderately well or less well. Another, more exacting way is to reduce what is usually

a long list into a manageable number (say 6 - 10) of clusters of related criteria (which often overlap in meaning). This option involves clarification and evaluation of each criterion proposed in the "brainstorm". Each participant is then invited to carry out a self-appraisal on one such cluster. A second way of generating a list is for each person to reflect individually and compose one criterion which is submitted to the pool. Members may agree with a previously proposed criterion, or after all have spoken, submit one or two additional criteria. A third way is to consult the research literature of the field under examination for criteria. This can be overly diverting from the group process and we therefore regard it as more appropriate to later stages of this work.

In selecting and evaluating criteria, we have often found it helpful to distinguish between minimal criteria, which all might be expected to meet, and criteria of excellence. In a first application of the method it is helpful to focus only on the minimal criteria.

4. Devise methods to evaluate quality of practice

The aim here is to devise simple ways of checking to see if criteria have been met in individual cases. Methods should be easy to use and within the scope of the participants. It would be no use suggesting complicated rating scales if special training were to be required for their use. The aim is not to produce measures which would stand up to scrutiny in a research forum, but to devise methods which have credibility to the participants. (In the long term we anticipate that this kind of participative inquiry into norms of good practice can generate papers and reports which will contribute to the literature of higher education and of the particular discipline concerned.)

Examples of methods chosen by some groups have included: the use of simple check lists plus reminders to use them, immediate retrospective analysis of samples of the chosen activity, the use of audio or videorecording with review by a trusted colleague, observation of particular kinds of defined activity ...

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5. Informal/private self-appraisal

Each individual in the group makes a personal assessment of his or her performance with respect to the criteria chosen. This takes the form of an 'armchair' appraisal in which the person reflects upon the relevant activities and the possibility of realistically applying the criteria and methods. The aim of this stage is to begin the process of self-appraisal and to begin checking to see if the criteria adopted and the methods chosen can be used in practice. If difficulties are foreseen then the process returns to stage 2. One way of facilitating this present stage is to invite participants on an individual basis to project themselves into the situation and imagine the way in which they would carry it out and the reactions of others who would be involved (e.g. students, colleagues, administrators). For example, others might be involved through completing checklists, engaging in a discussion of data, observation of teaching, convening of discussion with students and the swapping of experience. In several cases, members of a self-appraisal group have agreed to telephone each other to remind themselves of their agreement with the group.

This stage would conclude the first meeting of a series, someone having already photocopied and distributed (if possible) any data-recording proformas to members.

6. Self monitoring in daily practice

Between meetings each person applies the methods to aspects of the regular practice they have selected; they monitor their activities using methods which they have defined. They keep a record of both their findings and their responses to using the methods.

7. Revise practice in the light of self-appraisal

Monitoring of activities will inevitably raise participants' awareness about their own practice and about the monitoring procedures used, leading them to make improvements to either or both of these.

As the exercise is a development exercise and not a formal research project it is appropriate for changes to be made as soon as the need for and the nature of the changes are clearly identified. If this occurs prior to the next meeting some attempt should be made to monitor the changes to see if they do have the desired effect.

8. Report on application of self-monitoring process and procedures adopted

The group reconvenes to examine the experience of self-monitoring in daily practice. Each person reports on their experience of attempting to monitor their regular activities. The purpose of this stage is to examine the procedures used and not to report directly on the outcomes or findings.

THE LEVEL OF DISCLOSURE OF OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS IS DEPENDENT ON THE LEVEL OF TRUST AND CO-OPERATION IN THE GROUP. SOME OR ALL OF STAGES 9 TO 15 MAY BE INCLUDED IF THERE IS A HIGH DEGREE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND/OR AN EXPERIENCED GROUP FACILITATOR PRESENT TO ENSURE THAT SENSITIVITIES ARE RESPECTED.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE ALREADY EXPRESSED APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO THESE STAGES. THE FACILITATOR SHOULD REMIND PARTICIPANTS OF THE INITIAL CONTRACT THAT EACH PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE THE EXTENT OF THEIR DISCLOSURE AND THE CLASS OF REACTION DESIRED FROM OTHERS.

Some of the following stages may appear at first sight to be rather repetitious. This is not the case. However, some activities (10 - 13) *have been allocated a stage of their own to emphasise the distinctions between different types of feedback and to draw attention to the need for participants to consider carefully the nature and import of the responses they can make to their peers.*

9. Disclose self-appraisal

All participants who wish to describe their self-appraisal with appropriate evidence and illustrative examples from daily practice including (a) the

criteria adopted, (b) the methods used to produce the evidence, and (c) the effects of self-monitoring procedures on performance. At this point no comments are sought from the rest of the group, who listen in silence. Time limits may be set at this stage and any subsequent stages included. For example, individuals may divide an agreed time between those of stages 9-15 which have been selected by them. (See Appendix 2(d) for examples.)

10. Receive clarificatory questions

Anyone who has disclosed their self-appraisal may elect to receive questions and comments from the rest of the group. The simplest and least challenging type of questions are those intended to clarify and elaborate on what was disclosed. Clarificatory questions should be of the type, 'Can you explain what you did ... when ...?' or 'How did you manage to observe ...?' 'Could you expand on ...?' 'I'd like to know more about ...'

Examples of undesirable questions are, 'Don't you think you should have ...?' or 'Why didn't you ...?' 'What would have happened if ...?'

11. Specified peer assessment

The person presenting the self-appraisal may then elect to hear the extent to which their peers agree with the appraisal of those matters presented regardless of whether there exists independent data to support those responses. Responses can be given in a set order, or at random.

At this stage and in those that immediately follow the need is clearest for a facilitator to draw the attention of the person and the group to the options available and to guard against the person receiving feedback other than that which has been sought. The entire process is predicated on the notion of self-assessment and this means that all are responsible individually for what they do and say and do not have to be subjected to the unsolicited views of others. In any case, the presumption is that persons may modify their self-assessments in the light of helpful comments by others

even if these are critical.

12. Receive critical, probing or challenging questions

Individuals may elect to receive more penetrating questions to help them more critically examine the validity of their appraisal, e.g. to reveal blind spots, or disclose restricted criteria. It is essential that no one be pressured into revealing information about themselves which they do not wish to discuss or be presented with unsolicited comments and opinions from others.

13. Negative feedback ... amplified doubts ... devil's advocature

The person presenting the self-appraisal may then elect to receive comments from others to help them reappraise and refine their self-appraisal. Feedback of any or all of the three kinds, which are progressively more challenging, can be received from the other group members. It is usually helpful if the feedback from others at this stage is deliberately subjectified. That is, comments and observations are of the type, 'My feeling about what you have said is ...', or 'My reaction to ... was ...', rather than the spurious objectification of: 'You are ...', or 'We can all see that ...', or 'Obviously you ...', which translates personal opinion into apparent matters of fact.

The manner in which feedback is given is also important: tone of voice, posture, etc. may inhibit the recipient from freely considering the comments offered.

14. Receive positive impressions and appreciations

This stage is required if the person making the appraisal elects to receive comments from others. On occasions comments can be critical or negative in nature, and if this occurs there must be provided an explicit opportunity for receiving positive and appreciative responses. Not only can a predominantly negative feedback session be unhelpful to the recipient, but it can also hinder others who may then be more inhibited in their own presentations later.

Whatever weaknesses may be apparent, every person can be expected to function with at least some areas of success. In any case positive feedback and an appreciation of areas of strength has the effect of helping individuals remain motivated to build on their strengths and improve practice in areas of weakness.

15. Review self-appraisal

It is helpful to arrange a time at the end of the previous stage when individuals can reflect on their self-appraisal, either with the group, in pairs, or alone. This can be combined with the next stage.

16. Make action plans

Either after the group meeting or as part of it, in pairs or in the group, individuals make (a) personal action plans with respect to changes in practice they wish to make, and (b) strategies for achieving these changes, both in as much detail as possible. It is often helpful to arrange for pairs to meet and support each other in implementing these plans and solving the inevitable problems which emerge.

17. Revise criteria and methods

Whether or not the optional stages 9 to 15 have been included in the workshop the group should move on to revising the criteria and methods of assessment in the light of the discussion of the monitoring of practice. If the group wishes to continue it may decide either to repeat the cycle from stages 2, 3 or 4 as appropriate or else to extend their application of steps 9-15 and continue to meet on a regular basis until the needs of the members are met. The group may also branch out from performing a strictly appraisal function to encompass activities designed to develop the skills and knowledge of the participants in the areas identified as being of common interest.

18. Self and peer accreditation

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the group to end the self-appraisal activities by having individuals accredit themselves in various areas of their performance. The aim of this final activity is for every person to make a formal indication with regard to those areas in which they are and are not able to operate competently and to receive the comment of their peers. Self and peer accreditation is less likely to occur in formal educational institutions than elsewhere and it is included here for the sake of completeness. It has been adopted in, for example, the training of counsellors and group facilitators.

Principles of practice

The elements involved in the workshop - self-appraisal, disclosure of that appraisal, and giving and receiving reactions to it - provide an interesting challenge to the participants. To be effective, participants will need to be open to themselves and to others. This quite naturally gives rise to apprehensions about the personal and interpersonal risks involved in sharing assessments. Underlying our approach is a deep appreciation of the vulnerability of each person to discoveries of personal frailty and fallibility, the effect this can have on self-confidence and the need for acceptance, respect, and support from others in attempting to confront the issues which arise.

Facilitator Role

It is necessary in most cases for one person to act as a facilitator for the process. This person may or may not be drawn from the group undertaking the appraisal, but if the person is a full participant in the group it is especially important that he or she has some awareness of the importance of the balance between group process and task content in small group situations.

The role of the facilitator is (a) to enable participants to have confidence in themselves and each other, (b) to help create a supportive climate especially in higher risk areas and parts of the process, (c) to help each stage be appreciated and understood and (d) to assess the degree of risk acceptable to each person and to the group at each stage. In doing so, he or she will maintain the essential contract involved and ensure (a) that there is no pressure on any person to disclose more than they are willing, (b) that participants are not expected to complete all stages merely for the sake of doing so, and (c) that they are not expected to work through the stages at a rate too quick for the process to unfold without pressure to complete. Participants should learn to accommodate what is essentially a safe though unfamiliar structure. The facilitator should also be ready to defuse any tensions arising as well as help each individual achieve closure on each stage. The facilitator will draw attention to and, if necessary, interrupt personal and interpersonal invalidations such as indirect verbal attack or interventions outside the chosen contract, and in addition offer such guidance to participants as to ensure the process may continue validly, by offering appropriate ground rules for behaviour at each stage.

The facilitator will also ensure that participants carry out only those stages they voluntarily choose.

In a closed community such as members of a particular department, facilitators will help individuals deal with their responses to new, shared knowledge which was hitherto private, and work through the interpersonal conflicts and tensions which may be generated. They will also facilitate a review of the whole process.

We therefore recommend that the workshop be facilitated by a person with prior experience either as a participant in the method, or in personal or interpersonal development activities. We believe that prior experience of facilitating personal and/or interpersonal development groups is essential if steps 9-15 are to be effectively applied. However, experience of these stages as a participant is in itself a significant training for facilitating others.

The very act of making suggestions about actions and activities in some sense

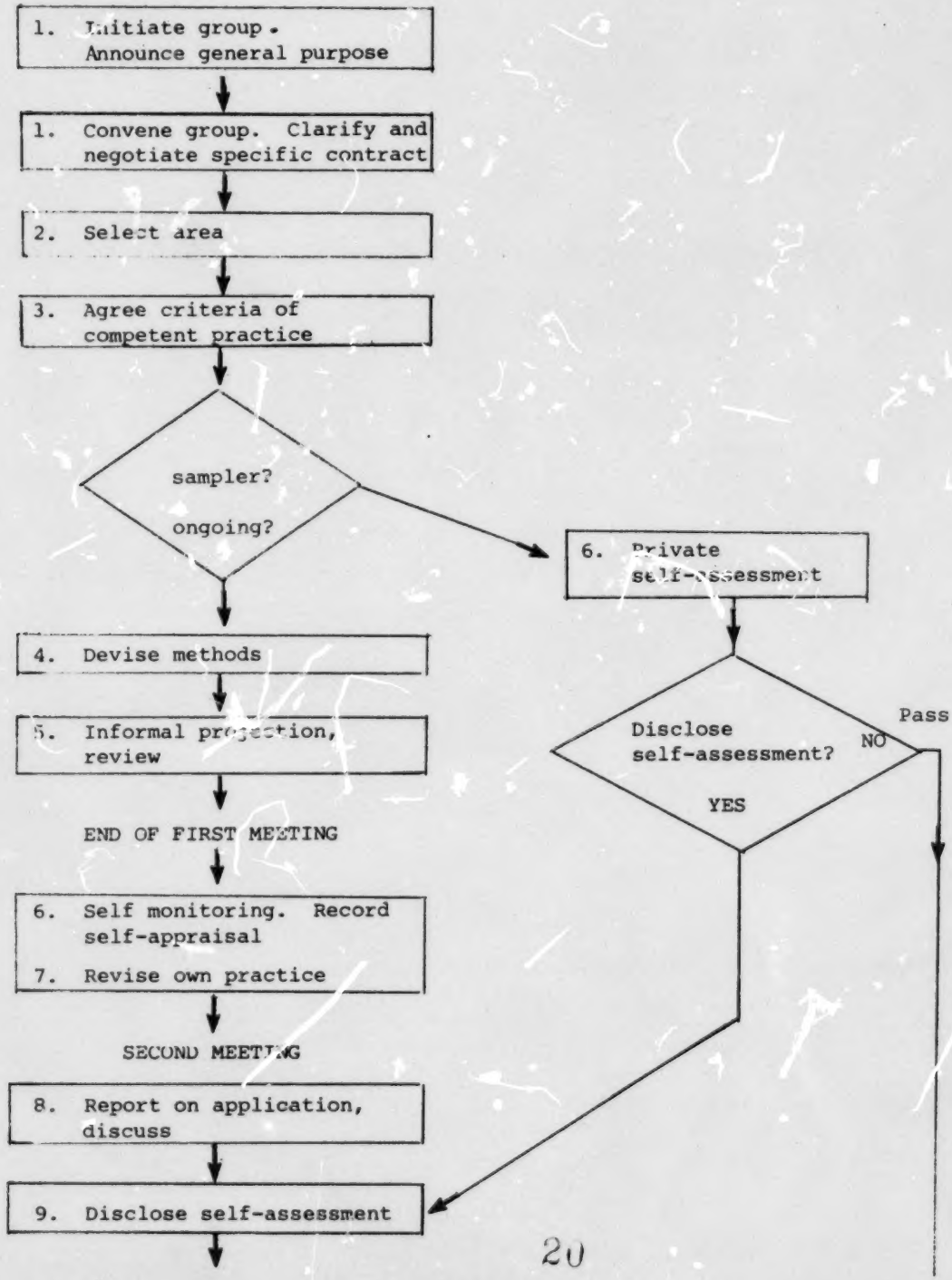
acts to apply pressure on participants to conform to the suggestions made. It is particularly important that the stress made on the voluntary principle is not used as a manipulative device to enforce conformity. It is desirable that facilitators provide a range of options at each significant part of the process and act in such a way that they are seen to respect and concur with the decision made by each individual on whether or not they should participate in any activity.

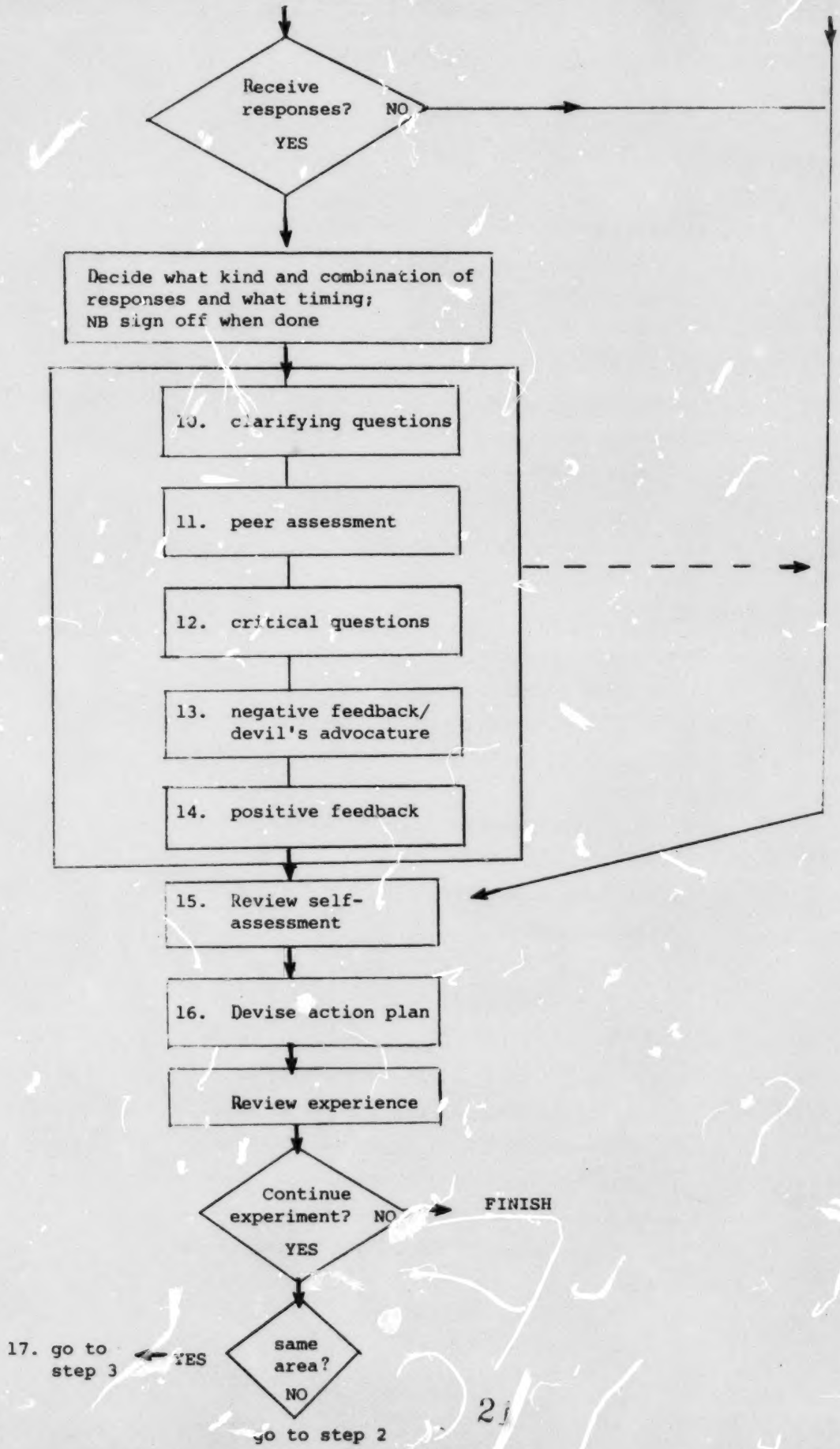
In carrying out the facilitative role, we recommend that as far as possible the facilitator is a participant engaging in the process, acting as a model by entering each stage first. This can make it easier for participants to overcome their reticence about taking part and will also demonstrate that the activities are realistic. In some instances facilitators may not have personal experience in the area being appraised. Then they may appraise their own skills as facilitators allowing participants to give feedback on their experience and observations during the work of the group.

APPENDIX 1

FLOW DIAGRAM (A technology of group process)

This flow diagram is intended to present a summary of the steps outlined in the paper as a guide to the process of the activity for the purposes of planning and evaluating. If it seems mechanistic this is primarily due to the need to find a simple visual tool for the purpose of presentation. Such can never do justice to the complex reality of purposeful human interaction, nor should it be regarded as a rigid blueprint to preempt creative development of the idea presented by others.




Receive responses?
NO
YES
Decide what kind and combination of responses and what timing; NB sign off when done
10. clarifying questions
11. peer assessment
12. critical questions
13. negative feedback/ devil's advocature
14. positive feedback
15. Review self-assessment
16. Devise action plan
Review experience
Continue experiment?
NO
FINISH
YES
same area?
YES
17. go to step 3
NO
go to step 2

APPENDIX 2

Examples to indicate variations possible

(a) Condensed version for 8 people

15' introduction
15' brainstorm: choose one area
15' brainstorm criteria (chalkboard or flipcharts)
15' private staff appraisal against 1 or 2 criteria from list
5' short break
80' 10' each, disclose self-appraisal and receive reactions (e.g. 2' disclose + 3' clarifying questions, 2' negative feedback, 2' positive feedback and 1' review self-appraisal)
20' 10' each in pairs to review and devise action plan
15' closing discussion
180'

(b) Two session meeting for 8

Meeting 1

15' introduction
25' brainstorm areas: choose 1 area
15' brainstorm criteria on flipcharts/chalkboard
30' review, cluster criteria, rewrite on flipcharts
10' break
30' devise methods, agree self-monitoring strategy
10' project into future
15' report on feasibility
15' review discussion
165'

Meeting 2 (after 1-2 weeks)

30' report on application (3' each + discussion) this can be the subject of an intermediate meeting in which record forms (and the self-monitoring strategy) may be changed
120' 15' each max (short break to stretch if necessary) to disclose self-appraisal and receive responses
20' 10' each in pairs to review and devise action plan
10' review
180'

(c) Ongoing self-appraisal project

The pattern for a series of meetings would follow the form of the two session meeting. Subsequent meetings would involve choosing another (perhaps more challenging) area of performance and repeating the process in much the same way; revising or extending the criteria (perhaps with a preliminary self-appraisal, without response) in the original or any subsequently chosen area. It would be hoped that a facilitator would become unnecessary after say two complete cycles, except when interpersonal relationships were being explored for the first time. In that case a group might be expected to organise in their own way how to write up any reports on their work for wider dissemination.

(d) Variations for steps 9-15

There are many ways of combining steps 9-15 which can be chosen on different occasions. The following are typical:

6' each:
- 2' disclose + 4' clarifying questions
- 6' disclosed self-appraisal
- 2' disclose + 4' peer assessment
- 2' disclose + 2' negative feedback + 2' positive feedback

15' each:
- 4' disclose + clarifying questions till no more are asked
- 5' disclose + 5' peer assessment + 3' confronting questions + 2' positive feedback
- 4' disclose + 5' confronting questions on anything disclosed + 3' devil's advocate on ANY aspect + 2' positive feedback of ANY kind + 1' review of self-appraisal

APPENDIX 3

Comments on specific stages

In some stages, specific aspects may be highlighted. In Stage 2 we recommend that easier areas are considered in the first application of the method, technical aspects of practice being easier than interpersonal, interpersonal relationships with students being easier than those with peers.

In Stage 3 difficulty may be experienced in attempting to provide a practical list of criteria. Many people have difficulty in thinking in terms of criteria deriving in most part from their being more familiar with criteria laid down by others such as occurs in most education and training. Sometimes the range of criteria may not appear to the facilitator to be comprehensive. Then it is a matter for good judgement whether or not to offer additional items. A restricted range of criteria is easier to manage in the first application.

In Stage 4, participants are likely to be very creative in designing data gathering and recording methods. Sometimes, however, it may be helpful to announce a range of methodological options, e.g. counts of specific events, notes on critical incidents, diaries, simple rating scales, work products, standard records. A tape recorder is particularly helpful to provide a record for each participant especially in steps 11-14. Alternatively, a colleague may make notes.

In Stage 9 there may be a tendency for others to comment, or to pose questions during or after the statement of self-appraisal. Since such disclosure heightens the personal challenge inherent in the method, the facilitator should always intervene to ensure that the contract is kept. It is generally best to present self-appraisals in a voluntary, rather than a predetermined, order.

In Stages 9 to 14 the facilitator should take particular care in making the group aware of the different kinds of feedback and disclosure which are available. The facilitator should help members of the group instruct themselves in making sensitive and aware discriminations between different kinds of feedback. Of particular importance are the distinctions between personal reaction and projection, between the subjective and the objective, and between

constructive (i.e. supportive even if negative) and destructive criticism. The importance of this point may merit a separate practice stage using examples provided by the facilitator or the group.

In reviewing these stages and participants' reactions to them indirect feedback to others must again be disallowed. On occasions tendencies by individuals to make their assessment seem better or worse than the reality may also be explored. The facilitator can do this by inviting individuals to comment on the congruence of their feedback to themselves with that provided by their peers. Such an exercise can draw attention to the propensity of some people to systematically devalue either their own performance or that of others.

In Stage 10 clarifying questions may have a confronting content or manner and so have a covertly critical nature unsought by the subject of the question. These may be rephrased on invitation from the facilitator or any other group member.

In Stage 16, it is often helpful to invite participants to clarify the support that they may give themselves, or that they seek from others (if in pairs, the other would be the partner) to maintain motivation to carry out the action plan, and to solve problems encountered in attempting to implement it.

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FEEDBACK SHEET

Self-appraisal for university teachers: a guide for workshop leaders

(Please complete and return this sheet to Dr. David Boud, Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW 2033, Australia)

We would appreciate specific feedback in any format from anyone who uses this approach in full or in part, or who wishes to comment on this guide. Of particular interest to us are comments which will enable us to present these ideas and approaches in a cogent and accessible manner, and which will help us to assist anyone who may act as a facilitator to a self-appraisal group. We would also welcome examples of reports and records of workshops and specimens of self-appraisals from anyone willing to share them with us.